



## 2006-2007: Rest in Peace

Posted by **Pierluigi Oliverio** on Monday, July 02, 2007

### City Hall Diary

I survived another late night city council meeting. This one was the last of the 2006-2007 fiscal year. The meeting began at 1:30 p.m. but did not end until 11:30 p.m. I am not quite sure if having a ten hour meeting allows for the time needed to go over important items like Coyote Valley, a hazardous waste facility, and Evergreen, among others. Members of the community come to the city council meetings and have to wait for hours just to be heard for one or two minutes regarding their particular issue. And, of course, we had a smorgasbord of last-minute issues that either couldn't wait until August, or were not planned appropriately to come up at an earlier meeting date.

Here are a few important issues with my opinions.

#### **Surplus city owned property**

In an attempt to acquire revenue, the Public Works Department brought forth a proposal to auction off various parcels of city owned land. A few of those parcels were identified by community leaders in my district for possible parks. I removed this proposal from the consent calendar and asked that it to be deferred to October. As we know, land is a precious commodity; once we sell, it is gone forever. If the city is serious about saving money, then I think the city should do a better job of managing its everyday expenses—not sell land that will only increase in value.

#### **Coyote Valley**

As I have mentioned before, I am not supportive of developing or planning for Coyote Valley at this time. Currently, there are many reasons why this development would be harmful for San Jose, such as the lack of tax base, depletion of city services, sprawl, and depleting open space. The question I have is: Is the city being disingenuous with allowing the planning to continue? For example, if the city as a whole does not want to develop Coyote now, then we should stop planning. Some of our best planners are working on this project which takes them away from other infill developments that deserve expertise.

## **Evergreen**

The discussion of Evergreen reminded me of a mathematics class: a complex formula of merging both Mayor Reed's and Vice Mayor Cortese's memos together with a few amendments. In the end, we had something to move forward with and will review each proposed development case by case.

## **\$2 million nets for the Los Lagos Golf course**

After spending over \$100, 000 on a consultant, it was determined that the city owned golf course, Las Lagos, needed new netting at a cost of \$2 million to keep the golf balls from going in the street. Yes, \$2 million for nets. The golf course was "supposed" to be profitable. Instead, the city has spent \$24 million on the golf course already since it was opened approximately a decade ago. Las Lagos has operated at a loss every year—absolutely no profit.

Las Lagos sits on 200 acres of city owned property. One might think that the investment of \$24 million on a golf course isn't working and the city should cease spending money on it. Perhaps we could use the 200 acres for organized play. I believe that San Jose should open a similar business like Twin Creeks in Sunnyvale, which offers organized fee-based team sports for both men and women. Twin Creeks is a private company that makes money offering organized play to our residents.

I am confused as to why a city government would continue spending millions on a golf course. Decisions like these keep me up at night. Rancho Del Pueblo, which is another city owned golf course, has also operated at a loss since it opened.

## **Hazardous waste site at Las Plumas**

After looking at six other sites, the City of San Jose decided to place its hazardous waste site at Las Plumas. This facility will serve the city well. Residents will be able to drop off paint, batteries, aerosol cans, etc. We don't want residents throwing these items into the ground or gutter. I must share that the city is feeling the ramifications of the poorly made decisions of converting industrial land to housing. Fewer and fewer options for industrial uses in San Jose are available. Another example was the difficulty of finding industrial land for CWS, the new garbage hauler in San Jose. As Mayor Reed, a few other council members and I have stated, we need to stop the conversion of industrial land.

For the month of July (during the council recess) I will be working at my private sector job. I think it is important that I continue my profession so that I don't lose perspective of the "real world."